

Subject: sermon 10-14

Luke 16:19-31

INTRO - It has been stated for many years that the thing American people dread most is speaking in public. However, there is a kind of public speaking, which I believe brings even more fear, that is witnessing to one's faith.

So, how do you feel about Friendship Sunday which is coming up? How do you feel about sharing your faith with another, and inviting them to worship? For many, I would expect there is apprehension, discomfort. In some I sense at times the feeling that this witnessing stuff is just one of the inconveniences of belonging to the church?

If Friendship Sunday were just a wild idea of the Pastor, or the Evangelism Committee, that would be one thing. But I want you to realize the urgency behind this event. We find that urgency in today's Gospel lesson.

I. According to Jesus, heaven and hell are real. Throughout his life Jesus talked much about both heaven and hell.

A. In this verse we are told of heaven as a real place of security and love.

1. The poor man Lazarus, while living with the struggles of poverty in this world, received love, and security in heaven.

2. In other places the Bible describes heaven as a great banquet, or a place of many wonderful rooms, with a place for all God's people.

3. Heaven is described as a garden, or paradise, where God's people dwell with the Lamb.

4. Heaven is described as a glorious city where God dwells with his people, and where there is no more pain, no more crying, no more grieving, and no more death.

5. In other words, Jesus lets us know that heaven is a real place that is so wonderful you never want to miss it.

B. On the other hand Jesus describes hell in this verse also.

1. Now many people don't like to think of hell.

2. Jesus uses the word 12 times in the Gospels, and has other descriptions of hell in Scriptures.

3. It is called the outer darkness.

4. It is the place where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

5. 2 Thessalonians 1:9 says it is a place of 'eternal destruction and SEPARATION FROM GOD.'

6. Hell is a real place that is so bad you never want to end up there.

II. The wonderful thing is God doesn't want anyone to end up in hell either.

A. So God calls his people to life.

1. John 3:17 says, For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

2. 2 Peter 3:9 says, The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

3. 1 Timothy 2:4 says, [God] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

4. God's will for everyone is eternal life in heaven.

B. But God also know the reality of hell.

1. We see that in today's lesson.

2. In John 3:18 Jesus says, Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

3. Part of that reality is that it is too late to turn to the Lord after we die.

A. Today's story shows that truth.

B. That is why the rich man was so anxious to keep his brothers out of that place.

C. God loves people SO MUCH that he sent His only Son, he sent Jesus to earth to live, and to suffer, and to be murdered, and to rise again, so that no one ever has to go to hell.

1. How much do you care for your friends, your neighbors, your family?

2. God's plan is for you to share that love, in perhaps the best way ever.

3. Share the Savior with them. Invite them to worship.

CONCLUSION: I once had a friend who stood beside me when we met a man who said he didn't believe in God. She cried. She said, 'He may end up in hell.' She cared for this other man as God wants us to care.

But, I have a better idea to care than crying. Share Jesus. Invite your friends to worship. It is the absolute best thing you can do for them.